

Message Text

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60

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /136 W

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R 151733Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8506

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 0462

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: MCAP PINT NATO DA

SUBJ: DEFENSE MINISTER'S VIEWS ON MILITARY AND
POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: COPENHAGEN 368, 3071

SUMMARY: DURING MY CALL ON NEW DEFENSE MINISTER FEB 15, HE ASSURED
ME THAT LEVEL OF MILITARY SUPPORT AGREED IN FOUR-PARTY COMPROMISE
OF 1973 WILL CONTINUE. DANES HAVE NOT HAD MUCH DIFFICULTY IN RECRUIT-
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ING VOLUNTEERS TO TAKE UP SOME OF SLACK LEFT BY CUT IN CONSCRIPT TERM FROM NINE TO TWELVE MONTHS. MINISTER APPEARS TO BE FIRMLY PRO-NATO AND PRO-US IN SYMPATHY AND SPEAKS ABOUT HIS MINISTRY'S ACTIVITIES WITH AUTHORITY. HE BELIEVES THAT CURRENT GOVT MIGHT LAST FOR ANOTHER 1000 DAYS, BUT CAUTIONED THAT ITS SMALL PARLIAMEN-TARY BASE MEANT A VERY PRECARIOUS EXISTENCE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE NEW DEFENSE MINISTER, ERLING BRONDUM, IS 43 YEARS OLD AND HAS SPENT HIS ROFESSIONAL LIFE AS A JORNALIST. HE HAS FAMILY TIES WITH THE MILITARY, HOWEVER,AS HIS FATHER WAS AN ARMY COLONEL AND HE, HIMSELF, IS ONE OF MODERATE LIBERAL PARTY'S LEADING SPECIALISTS ON MILITARY AFFAIRS. BRONDUM IMPRESSED ME AS AN ARTICULATE AND INTELLIGENT YOUNG MAN, WHO HAS TAKEN OVER VERY EFFECTIVELY IN THE SHORT PERIOD HE HAS BEEN IN HIS MINISTERIAL POST.

2. BRONDUM SAID THAT DEFENSE MINISTRY IS PEACEFUL SPOT IN MIDDLE OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL WARFARE, AS THERE IS LITTLE OR NO CHANCE THAT LAST YEAR'S DEFENSE COMPROMISE WILL BECOME UNBUTTONED. FOUR PARTIES WHICH NEGOTIATED LONG GERM COMPROMISE AT THAT TIME STILL HAVE LARGE MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT AND THE FEW RADICAL LIBERALS WHO TALK ABOUT REDUCING MILITARY EXPENDITURES ARE JUST FLAG WAVING, HE ASSERTED. HIS POLICY IS TO CARRY OUT COMPROMISE AGREEMENT AND HE HAS TOLD PRIME MINISTER HARTLING THAT IF DECISION MADE TO UNDERMINE AGREEMENT, PM WILL HAVE TO FIND A NEW DEFENSE MINISTER. HARTLING REPORTEDLY ASSURED HIM SUCH DECISION WOULD RE-QUIRE ENTIRELY NEW GOVT.

3. BRONDUM SAID THAT HIS EXPENDITURE REQUESTS FOR WEAPONS PROCURE-MENT WILL GO THROUGH PARLIAMENT WITHOUT DIFFICULTY. MOROVER, AL-THOUGH FREEZE ON NEW GOVT HIRING HAS BEEN PUT INTO OPERATION, THIS DOES NOT AFFECT MILITARY RECRUITMENT, WHICH IS CONTINUING. HE NOTED THAT IT SEEMS EASY TO GET NEW RECRUITS, BECAUSE OF GOOD PAY. ALTHOUGH SOMEPROBLEMS ARE BEING ENCOUNTERED BECAUSE OF REDUCTION IN LENGTH OF CONSCRIPT SERVICE TO NINE MONTHS, MANY CONSCRIPTS SIGN UP FOR FULL TWELVE MONTHS TO OBTAIN HIGHER PAY FOR FINAL THREE MONTHS. DANES NOW CONCENTRATE ON TRAINING OF CONSCRIPTS DURING THEIR SER-VICE, RATHER THAN SING THEM TO FILL UNITS, AND ARE TRYING AT SAME TIME TO STRENGTHEN HARD CORE OF PROFESSIONAL MILITARY.

4. MINISTER COMMENTED THAT DANES HAVE NOT YET FULLY STUDIED LEASONS
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OF RECENT MIDDLE EAST COFLICT, NOTING THAT TERRAIN AND CLIMATE ARE VERY DIFFERENT HERE. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT MORE ANTI-TANK ROCKETS WILL BE NEEDED.

5. I EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR EFFORTS DANES HAVE BEEN MAKING TO MEET REQUIREMENTS OF JACKSON-NUNN LEGISLATION AND REFERRED TO PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURES FOR EUROPEAN ALLIES TO DO MORE FOR THEIR OWN DEFENSE.

BRONDUM SAID HE HOPED DANES WOULD NOT HAVE TO LOOK FORWARD TO PROSPECT OF WESTERN EUROPE HAVING TO DEFEND ITSELF WITHOUT US SUPPORT. I SAID THAT FREE EUROPE WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO US BUT THAT PUBLIC OPINION IN AMERICA HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF SHORTFALL IN EUROPEANS' OWN EFFORTS IN DEFENSE FIELD. MOREOVER, MANY AMERICANS FEEL THAT EUROPEANS LET US DOWN IN RECENT MID EAST CONFLICT. BRONDUM COMMENTED THAT HIS OWN PRO-AMERICAN FEELINGS HAVE BEEN REINFORCED BY HIS SON'S RECENT ONE-YEAR STAY IN MASSACHUSETTS UNDER AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE PROGRAM.

6. ON GENERAL POLITICAL SITUATION, BRONDUM SAID GOVT COULD, OF COURSE, FALL AT ANY TIME BUT HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE GOOD FOR ANOTHER 1000 DAYS. MINORITY GOVT OF HIS MODERATE LIBERAL PARTY SEEMED TO BE LEAST BAD OPTION FOR THE OTHER PARTIES. GALLUP POLLS WILL BE WATCHED WITH INCREASING INTEREST AS YEAR GOES ON, HOWEVER, AND NEW ELECTIONS IN SPRING WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING.
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